

County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia

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County SAFER with More Firefighters

Lumpkin County's Fire/EMS Department has beefed up its staff with seven new firefighters, thanks to a grant awarded this year by FEMA. The \$722,000-plus SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grant enables the department to increase its number of trained, front-line firefighters to comply with new federal standards. Ultimately, the additional staffing should reduce response times and enable Fire/EMS to establish safer, more efficient incident scenes more quickly. The new firefighters, most of whom are already trained and experienced, joined the department in November. The SAFER grant will be paid out over a five year period, reimbursing the county for 90% of the cost of the positions the first year, with the reimbursement amount decreasing incrementally until the county picks up the entire cost of the positions in the fifth year and beyond.

Family Donation Enables Playground

With baseball and soccer fields, a softball complex, tennis courts, walking trails, a Pavilion and picnic tables and even a community garden, you might have thought Yahoola Creek Park had it all. But there was one thing missing: a children's playground. That changed a few months ago, when a citizen's generous donation to the county a decade ago provided funding to build one. The late Roscoe Tate, who passed away in August, made the donation when former sole Commissioner Steve Gooch took office in 2000 amid financial crisis. The funds were not dedicated for any particular use, and there were no strings attached, but Gooch felt strongly the donation should be saved for something positive and lasting—not just to pay overdue bills. In 2004, with Gooch as chairman, the then-Board of Commissioners set the

Free Swine Flu Vaccine for All

It seemed like Christmas came early at the Lumpkin County Health Department when a large shipment of H1N1 (Swine) Flu vaccine came in the first week of December. Like other healthcare providers around the nation, the department had been required to restrict vaccines to high risk groups most vulnerable to the 2009 Swine flu. Now, with plentiful supplies, the Health Department is offering vaccinations to everyone. They even gave the vaccines at the middle and high schools this month. The vaccine is recommended for everyone over the age of 6 months.

Appointments are recommended to ensure the most efficient service; walk-ins will be worked in as possible, depending on nurse availability. Please call 706-867-2727. Oh, and about the cost of the Swine Flu vaccine at the Lumpkin County Health Department? It's FREE!

Note: Vaccine supplies are increasing and may also be available to the general public at private physicians' offices, pharmacies and other locations, usually for a fee. Wherever you plan to be vaccinated, you are encouraged to call ahead to check on availability.

wheels in motion to use the Tate family's gift for a playground. The current Board of Commissioners picked up the project and ran with it. Coordinating plans with Parks and Recreation director Steven Proper, Mark French, budget and grant analyst, managed the budget and culled dozens of catalogs to choose the equipment. Members of the roads departments prepared the site, erected the fence and assembled and installed the equipment, and buildings and maintenance staffers spread 34 tons of recycled rubber mulch on the ground to make the area play-ready.

A Few (Holi) Days Off

Lumpkin County government offices will be officially closed Dec. 24, 25 and 31, that's Christmas Eve and Day and New Year's Day. In addition, some offices may also be closed on Dec. 23. If you have county business to conduct on Dec. 23, please call ahead before heading to the courthouse.

Merry Christmas!

A Walk to Remember

Put on your hiking shoes. Another walking trail project has been completed in Lumpkin County. Opened to the public in October, this one guides foot traffic over about two and a half fairly strenuous miles around Lake Zwerner at the Yahoola Creek Reservoir. Access to the trail is at the lake's boat ramp on Highway 60. There, you'll find a sheltered kiosk with maps of the trail. About three-quarters of the way through the trail are a comfort station, a covered pavilion and another kiosk. Along the way are breathtaking views from a range of elevations, thick mountain laurel and carpets of fern, even a peaceful pond that can't be seen from any road. The trail was made possible with funding assistance from a Recreational Trails Program grant administered by the Department of Natural Resources, along with countless volunteer hours from the Yahoola Creek Reservoir Study Committee and many others in the community. There is another beautiful county walking trail, about a mile and a half long, at Yahoola Creek Park.



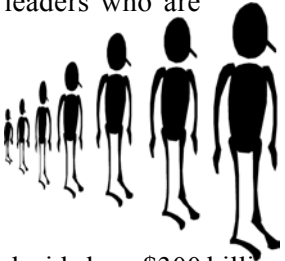
Thank You...

for paying your taxes on time. If you haven't paid them yet, please contact the Tax Commissioners Office.

Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side

Accurate Count Makes Good Census

Census forms won't show up in mailboxes until next March, but local efforts are already underway to encourage everyone to participate. Lumpkin County Commissioner Bill Scott and Dahlonega City Council member Gerald Lord are heading up a committee to educate the community about the 2010 Census and help make sure the next count is as complete as possible. They are organizing a team of local leaders who are



in positions to spread the word to a lot of people—especially people who might not learn about the census from the general media. So why's it so important to get an accurate census report? Well, there are several reasons, but there's one reason just about everyone can agree with: money. The federal government relies on census data to decide how \$300 billion a year in funding for schools, hospitals, roads, job training and other public services will be divided up among states and communities. If you'd like to help, please call Bill Scott at 706-864-8899 or Gerald Lord at 706-864-8897.

Safety Drives Awards

Safety on the job is important everywhere, but especially for those whose jobs put them behind the wheel. Think about the Lumpkin County employees in the Fire/EMS Department and Sheriff's Office, Roads, Parks and Recreation and Planning Departments, Tax Assessors Office and Transit System. Lumpkin County recently presented Safe Driver awards to 49 employees whose jobs require them to spend 50% or more of their time in a vehicle. As required by the Safe Driver award program, those receiving awards had not had any accidents or citations—on or off the job—for the one year award period. Each Safe Driver award winner received a certificate and Safety Award lapel pin, as well as a chance, by raffle, to win a day off with pay. Taking home the free day off, along with a county coin and listing on a permanent plaque to be displayed in the Courthouse lobby, were Glen Gaddis, Shane Murphy, Vicki Graham and Ed Cook.



Every Penny Counted Toward New Ambulance

When the Lumpkin County Fire and EMS Department put out the call for help to buy a critically needed new ambulance, every penny counted. Lumpkin County businesses and residents opened their hearts, their checkbooks and their piggy banks to make it happen. First, the Timken Foundation, an independent foundation supporting projects in communities hosting Timken Co. manufacturing plants, donated \$100,000. Then the foundation made a matching grant challenge. The terms: If the community could raise \$50,000 in local funds, the foundation would match that money with another \$50,000. The community met the challenge, raising the minimum needed—plus some. "It is wonderful to know that even in difficult times there are people willing to give out of the goodness of their hearts," said Fire Chief Ed Eggert. "The department is very grateful." The new ambulance is expected to be put into service by year's end.



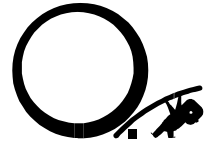
Judicial Center Update

From Morrison Moore Parkway, Lumpkin County's

Judicial Center looks close to completion. Columns and other elements of the Greek architecture-inspired pediment framing the front entrance, along with a few other details, will finish off the exterior. A walk-through of the building reveals the interior is nearly finished, as well. Tile work is done, carpet is down, light fixtures are in, cabinets and solid surface-topped counters are installed. Although workers are still busy with saws, paint brushes and other tools of the trade down almost every corridor of the nearly 55,000 square foot building, the contractor's assertion that the structure is 90% complete and will be finished in January 2010 seems right on target. Of course, that's just the structure. After that, attention will turn to outfitting the building with all the necessary technology elements and security features, things like the data/voice cabling system and video surveillance system, which is expected to take the better part of the spring to accomplish. And finally, there will be furniture to order and put into place before the Judicial Center becomes home to Lumpkin County's courtrooms, court personnel and many court-related services. Operations in the new Judicial Center are expected to begin July 1, 2010.

Health Department Update

When the Lumpkin County Health Department first occupied its current location 25 years ago, there was plenty of space to serve the community's needs. Over the years, an ever-growing client base has meant more staff, more desks, more medical equipment, more



Working for You!

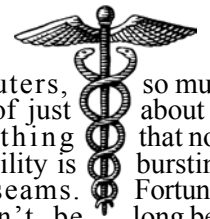
If you have a problem, question or concern involving your county government, answers and assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, visit www.lumpkincounty.gov or call (706) 864-3742.

Board of Commissioners

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computers, so much more of just about everything that now, the facility is bursting at the seams. Fortunately, it won't be long before the Health Department has a new home triple the size of its current one. Located next to the nearly completed new Judicial Center, the building is under construction—on schedule and on budget—and expected to be complete by summer. Besides the benefits of a better public health facility, the community will see some economic benefit from the project. Contractor Winter Construction made a concerted effort to encourage local contractor participation and reports nearly 40% of the subcontractors who will be involved in the project are based in Lumpkin County. All subcontractors are also being encouraged to purchase construction materials locally when feasible.